

Gates, Nina

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PSC SC  
DOCKETING DESK  
From: KeithowensABTECH@aol.com  
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2009 8:10 AM  
To: HLC@schouse.org  
Cc: HLC@schouse.org; TooleM@schouse.org; HSP@schouse.org; Chairman.Fleming  
Subject: Stretcher Van Regulations in LCI Committee from PSC

COPY

Posted: tod

Dept: SA-10RS

Date: 4/29/09

Time: 9:10

Re: Stretcher Van Regulations from the SC Public Service Commission

As a SC citizen I see many things that just do not seem right with the way the government is run. This idea of Non Emergency Stretcher Van is actually a very good idea that SC should have accepted 10 years ago. It seems that the Legislative Audit Council's Audit of the Transportation system also recognizes the need for this type of transportation. I was in the transportation industry until 3 years ago and I worked with many of the ambulance companies and I saw many fraudulent acts being done in the Private Ambulance industry and many were reported to the Attorney Generals Office. I will just go with the facts here which can be checked on with the appropriate state agency.

The parties that are against this are claiming this is an unsafe means of transportation and it will end up killing numerous citizen of our state. Right now there are stricter rules and regulations on Non Emergency Transportation regulated by the PSC and Office of Regulatory Staff then there are for the other states. The rules already in place would still be there and the new regulations would be addition to any existing regulations already placed on the non emergency industry. The drivers of these vehicles must go through all the federal regulations for driver files and maintenance of the vehicles (FMCSA parts 391 and 396) and as part of this must maintain a current Medical Examiners Certificate (DOT Physical) and also must comply with all ADA safety regulations and all OSHA regulations. They must have hands on training in First Aid, CPR, training for loading and unloading and also 12 additional hours of training in the area of safety each year. Look at what requirements an ambulance driver (very minimum) must have with DHEC and you may wonder why there are not more wrecks of ambulances each year.

The fraud that has taken place in the last 6 years has been tremendous and most has take place in the hands of the private ambulance companies. Around 6 - 7 years ago DHHS placed restrictions on all Medicaid wheelchair transportation and had a rule that you could only be paid for this type of transportation if you had an ambulance (certified through DHEC) in your fleet. This was what led to the fraud as the private ambulance companies along with the owners of the Nursing homes had total control of Medicaid trips and with no oversight from DHHS, the fraud continued to grow until the Medicaid Brokerage System was put in place (this was mentioned in the LAC report and also can be backed up by the Medicaid Fraud Unit at the Attorney Generals Office).

Another claim by the EMS association is that this could cause the ambulance companies to decommission many of their vehicles which would hurt SC if there was a disaster. I do not believe there is any way possible that the private ambulance companies could honor their evacuation contracts with the nursing homes (as required by DHEC) at this time and this will not change unless the ambulance companies all double in size. If emergencies arise, there are numerous national ambulance companies that could help with the evacuations. This additional type of Non Emergency Stretcher Van could also be very valuable if a disaster did happen. Many patients in a nursing home do not need any medical care when they are being transported and the ambulance companies could concentrate on the patients with a higher level of need first and the non emergency stretcher and wheelchair vans could also aid in the evacuation process.

This mode of transportation is not just for the Medicaid Transportation system. Medicare recognizes this mode of transportation in the states where it is allowed and this is at a tremendous savings to the citizens of the US. I would say that this system would save the Medicare System 5-6 times what it would save for the Medicaid system in SC (almost 1 million annually could be save as stated in the LAC report).

I just see so many problems and mis-information with many of our SC rules and regulations and I try and voice my opinion or knowledge when I can and I hate to see these regulations not passed just to keep the

money in the pockets of the private ambulance companies. All of the information I mentioned above can all be backed up by the PSC, ORS, DHHS, DHEC and the Attorney Generals Office.

Thanks for the time,

A Concerned SC Citizen

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